

SUMMARY: The term Restoration Movement as is used in the Churches of Christ refers to a time in the 19th century when there was a dedicated focus on returning to strictly following the scriptures. The church is never more than one generation away from apostasy and lukewarmness, so there is a continuing need for restorations.

The term Restoration Movement as is used in the Churches of Christ refers to a time in the 1800's when several men led the way in attempting to return to the ways of the New Testament and restore the New Testament church in beliefs and in form.

It differs from the Reformation Movement in that it did not attempt to reform the existing churches, it abandoned them for plain New Testament teachings.

The restoration principle is a principle that can be found in many religions and in many ages.

1. A principle that pleads for a return to a norm -- a standard.
2. It involves the belief that progress can be made by going back to the old standards.
3. Specifically, it involves going back to the Bible as the voice of authority in Christianity.
4. It pleads for the recognition of the New Testament as the only guidebook for the church.

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES OF RESTORATION

1. In the 8th century B.C. when Hezekiah came to the throne following the idolatrous reign of his father, Ahaz.
 - A. He broke down idols, cleansed the temple, restored the service of God and kept the Passover. This had not been done since the days of Solomon.
 - B. Hezekiah believed in going back to the law which had been given long before.
 - D. God believed that what he did was right for the record says, "Hezekiah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord." II Kings 18:3 (See II Kings 18:6)
2. One century later during the reign of Josiah we see another illustration of the same principle.
 - A. During this 18-year reign, in the course of repairing the worship of God, Hilkiah the priest found a copy of the law.
 - B. Shaphan, a scribe, read the book to the young king, and when he heard it he rent his clothes and gave this commandment: "to do all that is written concerning us" II Kings 22:13.

- C. Again, the inspired writer of Kings wrote, "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord."
- 3. The prophets echo the same plea.
 - A. Jeremiah, who was called to the office of prophet in the 13th year of the reign of Josiah, pleaded for a restoration. Jer. 6:16.

LEADERS OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

1. Thomas Campbell (1763-1854)
 1. Thomas Campbell was born in County Down, Ireland. His father was originally a Catholic, but later he became a member of the Church of England.
 2. After his education at the University of Glasgow and the Divinity School at Whitburn, Thomas Campbell became a minister in the Presbyterian Church.
 3. When his health failed, doctors advised a change of climate and work. Leaving his family in Ireland, he came to America in 1807, and settled in Washington County, Pa.
 4. The Presbyterians of that area were so divided that they would not fellowship one another. When Campbell sought to unify them by inviting members of different churches to worship there, he was brought before the presbytery for trial.
 5. The presbytery severely rebuked him. He appealed to the synod, which acquitted him, but with censor. He finally withdrew from the synod, becoming an independent preacher.
 6. He continued to preach anywhere possible, and throngs came to hear him. He then advocated the abandonment of everything in religion not scripturally authorized. It was he who to this time originated the slogan, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak..."
 7. His family joined him in 1808, and his son, Alexander, immediately joined his restoration plea.
 8. On August 17, 1809, "The Christian Association of Washington" was formed.
 9. On September 8, 1809 Thomas Campbell delivered his famous "Declaration and Address," which marked the beginning of the Restoration Movement.
 10. The Campbells joined the independent church at Brush Run, upon the restoration principles, and this church was later united with the Redstone Baptist Association.
 11. Thomas Campbell, though later overshadowed by his illustrious son, was the first great leader of the restoration.

12. He continued preaching with great influence for many years, and preached his last sermon in his 89th year, just a few weeks before his death.
2. Alexander Campbell (1788-1866)
 1. This famous son of Thomas Campbell was born in County Antrim in Ireland, and was destined to be one of the most powerful figures and ripest scholars of his age.
 2. Alexander possessed a brilliant mind, and even as a tender youth was fluent in Greek, French, and Latin. He committed to memory a voluminous amount of information from literature and history. He attended Glasgow University.
 3. Like his father, Alexander was deeply religious, and also became a Presbyterian minister.
 4. Joining his father's work in America, he called in question the validity of sprinkling. He was immersed by a Baptist preacher in 1812, together with his father and others.
 5. Alexander Campbell made his home, after his marriage at Bethany, Va., from whence he became the towering giant of the Restoration Movement.
 6. In literary work, Campbell was unexcelled. He owned his own printing plant. In 1823, he began publishing *The Christian Baptist*, which ran several years and through 46,000 volumes. In 1829, he began publishing the *Millennial Harbinger*, which he published until his death.
 7. Campbell was also an educator, founding Bethany College in 1840, which was primarily a religious school.
 8. He was also a man among men. In 1829, he was a member of the Virginia State Constitutional Convention, with ex-President James Madison as a fellow delegate.
 9. As a preacher and an orator, he was superb and without peer. In June 1850, he preached before both houses of Congress in Washington. He traveled thousands of miles, in America and Europe, and lectured and preached constantly. Henry Clay, James Madison, and other notables, heard him many times. Madison said of him, "I regard him as the ablest and most original expounder of Scripture I ever heard."
 10. His unusual mental stature made him a feared adversary in debate. Many refused to meet him on the platform, but he did have several debates. Most notable are his debates with the Catholic Bishop Purcell in Cincinnati in 1837, and his debate with skeptic Robert Owen in Cincinnati in 1829.

3. Barton W. Stone (1772-1884)
 1. Born in Maryland, Stone was also a Presbyterian, and became a minister in that denomination.
 2. Upon being ordained to the ministry, he stated that he would subscribe to the Confession of Faith "as far as it is consistent with the Word of God."
 3. As time passed he became dissatisfied with the Presbyterian Church in Kentucky, which was now his home, and left it.
 4. He then set out to preach simply the gospel as found in the New Testament, taking the name of "Christian" only.
 5. Gradually he developed clearer concepts of New Testament Christianity, and his influence spread rapidly in Kentucky and Ohio, where he established many congregations founded upon the simple New Testament principles.
 6. At this time, it is interesting to note that Stone and Campbell had never met. They met first in 1824 at Georgetown, Kentucky, and became fast friends.
 7. Those associated with Campbell were called "Disciples of Christ", and those with Stone were called "Christians".
 8. The efforts of Campbell and Stone were formally united at Lexington, Kentucky in 1832.
 9. Barton W. Stone was one of the greatest pioneers of the Restoration Movement. He and Alexander Campbell deserve the credit for its development.
4. Walter Scott (1796-1861)
 1. Born in Scotland, and educated in Edinburgh, Scott was a descendent of the famous poet, for whom he was named.
 2. Scott came to America in 1818 as a youth, and after a while he made his home in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
 3. He taught school for some years, studied the Bible diligently, and was baptized by a friend.
 4. Scott was an original thinker, bold and independent, and was of tender and sensitive disposition.
 5. He met Alexander Campbell in Pittsburgh in 1821, and at once they became deeply attached.
 6. Some have thought that Campbell and Scott were nearly equal in genius, eloquence, talent, learning, energy, and devotion to the truth. They were of great mutual help.

7. Walter Scott was an invaluable worker in the Pennsylvania and Ohio sections to the Restoration, winning many entire churches to return to New Testament Christianity.
8. Scott was a natural, brilliant orator. Once while listening to him preach, Alexander Campbell, who was usually very reserved, became so absorbed with the beauty of Scott's eloquent message that he jumped to his feet and exclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest!"
9. It was Scott who brought to the reformation the Scriptural arrangement of the conditions of pardon.
5. The drama of the restoration movement is by no means completely told in the lives and labors of the above men. We must also remember gratefully the enormous contributions made by such other pioneer preaching brethren as W. K. Pendleton, Benjamin Franklin, Jacob Creath, "Racoon" John Smith, John T. Johnson, William Hayden, D. S. Burnet, Tolbert Fanning, Moses E. Lard, Dr. T. W. Brents, J. A. Harding, John F. Rowe, J. W. McGarvey, E. G. Sewell, David Lipscomb and many others.

THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT SUFFERED DIVISION

1. The restoration movement spread across the central states as a prairie fire, gaining momentum as it went.
 1. In the Government census of 1850 it was listed as the fourth ranking church in America, and from 1850 to 1860 its ranks grew faster than any religious group in this country.
 2. But disaster struck the restoration, with an open division in its ranks, which resulted in two separate churches.
2. The first great occasion of cleavage was the formation of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849.
 1. The society was organized as an agency through which to preach the gospel, after years of effort by many toward the end of organizing churches for evangelism.
 2. A convention to organize a missionary society met on Tuesday, October 23, 1849, in the church building at Walnut and Eighth Streets in Cincinnati, Ohio. In this convention, the American Christian Missionary Society was formed.
 3. A constitution was drawn up for the society, and among other officers appointed were D. S. Burnet, Walter Scott, W. K. Pendleton, John T. Johnson, and Tolbert Fanning.

4. Opposition to the society grew, and among its chief opponents were Jacob Creath, Jr., Benjamin Franklin, and later Tolbert Fanning.
3. The second great cause for division was the introduction of instrumental music into the worship.
 1. There had been some discussion of the propriety and scripturalness of the instrument for some time before it was finally introduced into the worship.
 2. But the first church on record to use the instrument was at Midway, Kentucky in 1860.
 3. After the Civil War, the use of instrumental music increased, but frequently its introduction caused serious trouble.
 4. In 1867, the church in St. Louis purchased a building from the Episcopalians, with an organ in it. Violent opposition arose, and for the sake of peace the organ was not used for two years, except rarely. But later it was used regularly, and a division occurred in the church.
4. Finally, there was a complete parting of ways between brethren.
 1. As the society and instruments were introduced, there grew with their advocates an increased spirit of liberalism. These opened the door to a tide of innovations, and separated the churches now known as the "Christian Church" and the "Churches of Christ".
 2. The liberal society and instrumental group was in the majority, and took control of nearly all the church property.
 3. The complete separation of these groups was first given recognition in the government census report of 1906.
 4. According to the census report of 1906, compiled by J. W. Shepherd and which does not pretend to be complete, the Churches of Christ that year claimed 2,649 congregations, 159,659 members, and 2,100 preachers. They also possessed 1,974 church buildings.
 5. The same year the Disciples of Christ had 8,293 churches, 6,641 preachers, and a membership of 982,701.
 6. According to the World Almanac 1958, Churches of Christ had 17,950 congregations and 1,922,484 members.
 7. In 2017 the Churches of Christ had about 12,200 congregations and about 1,500,000 members.

CONCLUSION:

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

THE RESTORATION



1. The church is never more than one generation away from apostasy. Therefore, the preaching of the restoration's principles is doubly important.
2. The Lord's church in today's world must hold forth the distinctive teaching of the true apostolic church in all her beauty and glory and continue to adhere sternly to the NEW TESTAMENT.
3. Every generation needs this teaching. Hence, the church needs to continually emphasize the FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED and she needs to continually plead for all to WALK IN THE OLD PATHS.
4. We must continually plead for a strict adherence to Biblical teaching for this is the core of the Restoration Principle.
5. As congregations and movements tend to scope drift, there is a need for restoration in every generation.